

Hydrotherapy: Tool for preventing illness



Dear Friends,

Hydrotherapy, previously known as hydropathy, is a sector of medicine and alternative medicine, specifically physiotherapy and naturopathy. Fundamentally, it comprises water use for the relief of pain. The title covers an expansive variety of therapeutic techniques and approaches which grasp benefits of water's physical properties for therapeutic purposes, namely stimulation of blood circulation and symptomatic treatment of certain diseases. Water therapy involves the modulation of body temperature like delivery of hot and cold to the body. It encompasses submerging of all or part of the body in water and may involve many types of equipment, namely full body immersion tanks; neutral baths; sitz baths; contrast sitz baths; foot baths; cold mitten friction rub; steam inhalation; hot compresses, cold compresses; alternating hot and cold compresses; and arm, hip, and leg whirlpool. Immersion of the body in water or the application of water or ice to the body is external hydrotherapy. The variable effect of hot or cold water on the skin and underlying tissues is involved in temperature-based hydrotherapy. Application of hot water relaxes muscles and is used to treat arthritis, rheumatism, and sore muscles while cold water therapy stimulates the flow of blood in the skin. Fomentation is the application of moist heat and is used in chest cold and flu. Ice packs or cold compresses are used for sprains and headaches. Water jets, underwater massage, and mineral

baths (Swiss shower, balneotherapy) are used in existing hydrotherapy. Preinstalled jets are present in hydro machines, which shoots water on the body in specified time intervals. Specifically, water affects chakras of the body, i.e., gradually cleansing and opening the desired chakras. Hydrotherapists may utilize it for vasodilation and vasoconstriction purposes. Ultimately, alteration in blood flow occurs through physiological mechanisms like thermoregulation. Sometimes, for the treatment of wounds, tissue removal becomes necessary which is performed by direct wound irrigation or therapeutic irrigation with suction. The advantages of hydrotherapy comprise of detoxification (helps in elimination of waste), loosening tense muscles and assisting relaxation, enhancing metabolic rate and digestion activity, cell hydrating, and improving skin and muscle tone. In addition, it also boosts the immune system by its efficient functioning and also improves internal organs functioning by stimulating blood supply. Conclusively, it can be elucidated that in future hydrotherapy will become a major tool for stress relieving consequently, improving body function and preventing illness.

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